

## So Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

### *An Internet Inquiry*

*Abraham:* And God appeared to me and said, Avraham, Avraham, take the chicken, thine only chicken, that thou lovest, and take it across the road...

*Shulamit Aloni:* I'll eat as many chickens as I like on Yom Kippur, it's nothing to do with the haredim what I do in my home...

*Baal Shem Tov:* There was once a chicken in Medzibozh...

*Ben & Jerry:* New Launch: Grandma's Funky ChickenSoup Ice Cream, or Funky Chicken for short. 20¢ per tub to the Environmental Chicken Fund.

*Edgar Bronfman:* I shall be taking this matter up, on behalf of the WJC, with President Clinton, the Pope, and whoever's head of Russia this week...

*Charles Bronfman:* Forget the chicken! Let's get these teenagers to Israel: just think what will happen if they see an ISRAELI chicken crossing the road...

*Martin Buber:* I and Thou, Chicken.

*Shlomo Carlebach:* Yannani nini nini; yannani nini nini; yannani nini, yannani nini, yi nini nini; yini yannani yi ninininini....

*Bill Clinton:* Chaverim, I'd like to share with you a dvar torah on this important sh'eylah...

*Hillary Clinton:* I know we had Jewish friends at Yale but this is getting ridiculous!

*Complete Artscroll Siddur:* Bend once when the chicken goes onto the road (bending first at the knees, bending fully as it takes its second step); bend

again as it reaches the middle of the road (only a half bow); bend a third time as it nears the other side. If it gets across without being run over, say also a shehecheyanu (p. 358); unless the congregation is saying brochos before and after the shema, in which case no interruption, even for a brocha, is permitted. No brocha is said on yontef, rosh chodesh, or during the entire month of nissan. On erev Yom Kippur the chicken may be used for kapporos.

*God:* Thou Shalt Cross The Road !!

*Ibn Ezra:* It was not a specific chicken, it was any chicken (cf. Rashi).

*Emil Fackenheim:* We must all help the chicken across the road, whether the chicken wants to or not; to fail to do so would be to grant motorized vehicles a posthumous victory. The responsibility to help the chicken across the road is holy; it is not negotiable; it is the 615th Commandment...

*Viktor Frankl:* It was searching for meaning.

*Arthur Green:* A contemporary Jewish theology must incorporate the chicken's need to cross the road, even if we don't fully understand why it wanted to cross the road in the first place.

*Blu Greenberg:* In the first ten years or so of our marriage, Yitz and I didn't really focus on this question, we lived quite conventional Jewish lives, and had chicken soup every Friday night. I remember quite clearly the moment at which I first began seriously to think about this important question in a radically new light...Nevertheless I want to emphasize that in my view a synthesis of orthodoxy, feminism and the rights of the chicken is absolutely possible, difficult though this may sometimes seem in practice.

*Yitz Greenberg:* There have been three quite distinct historical Jewish responses to this question...

*Bonna Haberman:* What's most important is that chickens be able to daven freely at the kotel...

*David Hartman:* As I was saying to Shimon, Yitzhak, Ezer Weizman, Edgar Bronfman and the Pope, all of whom wanted to know my views on the subject...That reminds me, Motti, I want two chickens! And three bottles of wine!!

*Theodore Herzl:* One day, chicken, you WILL reach the other side. You may not believe it; others may not believe it; but fifty years from now...

*Hillel:* If I am not for the chicken, then who will be? But if I am only for the chicken, then what am I? And if it doesn't cross now, when?

*Meir Kahane:* The only good chicken is a dead chicken.

*Michael Lerner:* When I was the leading chicken's rights activist in the 60s, I actively studied the question. In the politics of meaning, no chickens will have to cross the road if they don't want to...

*Levinas:* [Answer completely unintelligible]

*Yediot Aharonot:* Chicken Run Over By Mack Truck!!! Graphic photos, pages 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5; The Sex Life Of The Chicken, pages 6 and 7; You Too Can Have Sex With A Chicken, page 8; other news, pages 9 & 10.

*Moses:* And the Lord said: "Thou shalt cross the road."

*Orthodox rabbi:* A very interesting sh'eyla. There are many different halakhic opinions on this vital question for our time. In my tshuva I shall review the opinions of the tannaim, amoraim, rashi, ralbag, ramban, rambam, the ger, the gor, the grib, the grilbag, the grandpa, grodzinskis, my grocer, jerry garcia, and heilige harav hagaon hashlita rebbe mashiach mendel shneerson...zt'l.

*Israeli Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi:* There can be no answer to this or any other question until this government increases allocations to the yeshivot immediately, fires Shimon Shetreet, and ends all archeological digs...

*Israeli Sephardi Chief Rabbi:* There can be no answer to this question until I consult with Arye Deri. He's awaiting a jail sentence for fraud? er, let me get back to you...

*Rodger Kamenetz:* It was amazing to see how this question united the age old cultures of Judaism and Tibetan Buddhism. As Yitz Greenberg said to Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, while the Dalai Lama looked on and several hundred Buddhist monks waved traditional prayer flags in the hazy Indian wind....

*Mordechai Kaplan:* Give the chicken a voice, not a veto.

*Pinchas Peli:* I was privileged to hear the Rav, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, speak on this subject. His discourses, which lasted several hours, were an experience which represented an exquisite and unparalleled combination of erudition, western philosophy, Torah learning, and knowledge of poultry....

*Shimon Peres:* Yitzhak Rabin, zikhrono l'vrakhah, would have wanted the

chicken to cross the road; it is our duty to unite together to see that it comes to pass..

*Judith Plaskow:* Where was the chicken in Jewish history? What was its name? Let us begin now to reclaim its significance, to refashion new rituals, to allow its voice to speak through the ages ...

*Letty Cottin Pogrebin:* In the early days on Ms. magazine I cared more about women than chickens; but I see now that this was a sort of false consciousness, an anti-chickenism within the movement...

*Ramban:* Really the chicken didn't have to cross the road: this was God's allowance for the weakness of human nature. In the time of the mashiach chickens will no longer have to cross the road.

*Rashi:* THE chicken: [i.e., without the definite article this might be any chicken, but THE suggests a particular chicken]; there is a midrash that this is the first chicken created in gan eden. A second opinion: *poulez* [old French].

*Reform rabbi:* Because it wanted to; in the modern era we all have autonomy, including chickens. And if any "orthodox" institution attempts to stop chickens crossing the road we will protest at this outrageous infringement of religious, civil and poultry freedoms...

*Franz Rosenzweig:* The chicken hasn't actually crossed yet, but I hope it may one day do so.

*Shammai:* Typical Hillel! Comes out with complete nonsense, and everybody ends up quoting him! Life is so unfair! And as for the chicken! If I get my hands on that chicken...

*Danny Siegel:* The chicken was doing a mitzvah, and so should we!

*R. Soloveitchik:* There were actually two chickens: Chicken One, and Chicken Two...

*Leslie Wexner:* I'm happy to announce a new \$40 million endowment to help answer this crucial question.

*The Zohar:* Rabbi Pinhas was on his way to visit his daughter, the wife of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. On the way, he encountered a chicken crossing the road, and he heard the sound of a cow. He said: There are no cows in sight. The chicken answered him: I am a cow, I am crossing the road to

Yerushalayim, so that I can be offered up as an olah. Rabbi Pinhas responded: Would that I could offer you as an olah, for your fragrance would rise directly to the ein sof. But, alas, cows don't have feathers.

*Rav. M. Tendler:* Of course I could answer this most simple and obvious question, but this attempt to state the most fundamental belief of Judaism through the impersonal medium of e-mail is fraught with danger. Can I possibly prevent your erroneous and illogical deductions in this attempt to teach the Torah "while standing on one foot." In all likelihood, you couldn't understand, although I can tell you one thing. Chicken, kosher; swordfish, treif.

*Judah ha-Levi:* My road is the East, but my chicken is in the farthest West.

*Elisha ben Abuye:* There is no chicken, there is no road.

*Bibi Netanyahu:* Most Israelis on the left mistakenly think that they want the chicken to cross the road. But not to let them get to the other side. And that's not really crossing the road. That's why I say it's better to keep them in the coop.

*Franz Kafka:* I woke up one morning to discover that I had been turned into a Chicken. I immediately felt a compulsion to cross the road. I cannot say why.

*Yeshayahu Leibowitz:* Stupid question. We simply follow the halakhah. The chicken crosses the road. That's it.

